



— Kosovo —

On 24 March, Operation Allied Force began after months of intense effort by the International Community to find a political solution to the crisis in Kosovo. NATO's decision to resort to the use of force was taken only after it became clear that all efforts to achieve a negotiated, political solution to the Kosovo crisis had failed and no other alternative was open.



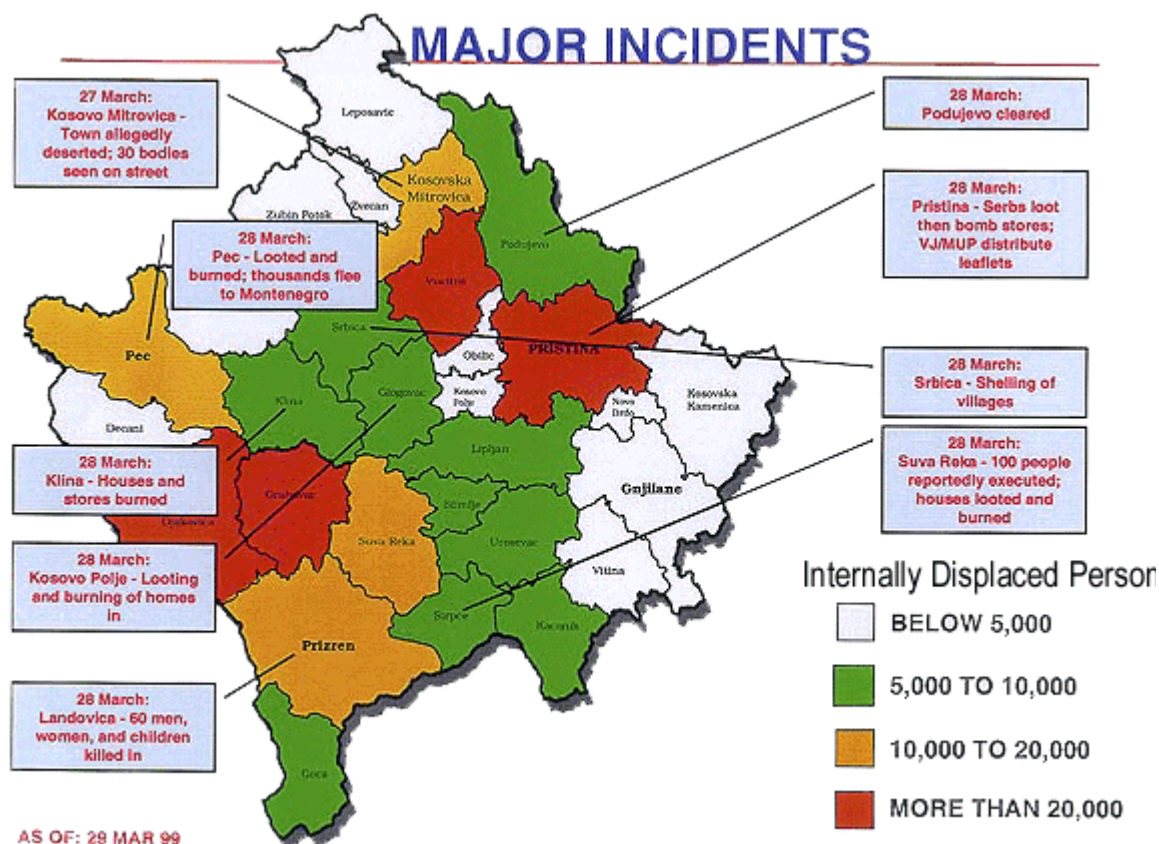
NATO aeroplanes initially conducted air strikes against Serbian air-defences.

Pre- (top right) and post (bottom left)-strike aerial photographs show the destruction of an anti-air missiles site in Obrva, Serbia

The Alliance's ultimate objective continues to be to support the diplomatic efforts of the international community to find a political solution to this crisis. Intensive air operations are now being conducted against Serb military and police targets with the aim of disrupting and weakening the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) government's ability to carry on its campaign of terror against the civilian population of Kosovo, to prevent further humanitarian catastrophe, and to avoid the spread of instability in the region. This expansion against the military structure of the FRY will intensify degradation of strategic targets and FRY forces in Kosovo despite significant risk. Every effort is being made to avoid collateral damage.

NATO condemns the wholesale expulsion of civilians from their homes and the wanton destruction now being perpetrated by Serbs security forces. The Alliance and its member states stand ready to support

international humanitarian efforts to ease the plight of refugees forced out of their homeland by Serbian forces.



Since the crisis deepened, NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Co-ordination Centre has augmented its staff and intensified its monitoring and reporting activities as well as its liaison work. It is collating information on nations' humanitarian actions and is relaying Albania's requirements to all Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council members -19 NATO and 25 non-NATO countries. The Centre continues to be the focal point of humanitarian aspects of the crisis. It remains ready to react if called upon to assist.

Further information is available at: <http://www.nato.int> or NATO Office of Information and Press, 1110 Brussels, Belgium. Fax: +32 2 707 1252. E-mail: natodoc@hq.nato.int

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